REMARKS

Claims 1-28 are currently pending in the application, with claims 1, 4, 7, 22, 24 and 26 being independent. Claims 1-26 were pending prior to the Office Action. In this Reply, claims 27 and 28 have been added to particularly define what the Applicant regards as his invention. Claims 1, 4, 7, 14, 22, 24 and 26 have been amended.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein. Applicant respectfully requests favorable consideration thereof in light of the amendments and comments contained herein, and earnestly seeks timely allowance of the pending claims.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §112

The Examiner rejected claims 1-26 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicant regards as the invention. The Examiner stated that the phrase "applying correction processing" allegedly renders the claim indefinite because it is unclear to what the correction is applied.

This rejection is respectfully traversed. Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to recite "applying correction processing to a boundary part which is judged not to be a true contour of the person", independent claim 4 to recite "an image correcting device which applies correction processing to a boundary part which is judged not to be a true contour of the person", and independent claim 7 to recite "applying correction processing to the boundary part".

In view of the above, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph rejection of claims 1-26.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §102

Blank Rejection

The Examiner rejected claims 1-6, 10 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. 102 (b) as being anticipated by US 5,345,313 ("Blank").

Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Applicant has amended claim 1 to recite determining a level of certainty as to whether or not the detected boundary is a true contour of the person for each part of the detected boundary. Applicant has amended claim 4 to recite a judging device which determines a level of certainty as to whether or not the detected boundary is a true contour of the person for each part of the detected boundary.

Blank merely discloses a system and a method for editing digital images that include an object and a background. The edge of the object has a first hue, and the background has a second hue. Based upon the difference between the hues and a predetermined hue difference, a processor locates the edge of the object and removes portions of the image (i.e., the background) that are outside the edge. The object can then be combined with a preselected background to form a composite image. Optionally, a gamma attribute of the preselected background and a gamma attribute of the image of the object can be matched, to make the object appear as if it was imaged under the same lighting conditions as the preselected background (Abstract). A digital image processed by Blank may include an object such as a human, positioned against an original background. The background of Blank may be a monochrome background, or a background of a predetermined color and pattern.

In Blank, for a monochrome background, a transputer 44 (Fig. 3) compares the gammas of adjacent pixels with a predetermined difference (col. 8 lines 14-18). The gamma of a pixel is a numeric value that represents pixel attributes that relate to hue, intensity, luminescence, saturation, and contrast of the portion of the image represented by the pixel (col. 7 lines 45-54). When the transputer 44 determines that the difference between a pixel under test and an adjacent pixel exceeds the predetermined difference, the transputer 44 maps the test pixel as a portion of an edge 66 of the image of a human 22 (col. 8 lines 44-55), because the test pixel does not belong to the monochrome background. The transputer 44 performs this analysis on a pixel-by-pixel, row-by-row basis, to determine the edge 66 of the human 22 in the digital image (Fig. 5D). For the edge in Fig. 5D, the transputer 44 may perform a fuzzing function to reduce the fuzzy edge 66 to a smooth edge (Fig. 5E, col. 9 lines 30-60).

In Blank, if the background is a checkerboard background 34 (Fig. 2), the transputer eliminates complete boxes 38 of the background that match a background map stored in a

memory (col. 10 lines 20-29). The transputer 44 then removes incomplete background boxes with pixel-by-pixel, row-by-row refined background stripping (col. 12 lines 1-5). For this purpose, the transputer 44 selects a new test pixel, and accesses a portion of the stored background map, where the portion corresponds to the position occupied by the test pixel. The transputer 44 determines whether the test pixel is a dot in a box of the checkerboard background 34 (col. 12 lines 6-14). If the transputer 44 determines that the test pixel is not black (not a dot in a box of the checkerboard background 34), the transputer 44 designates the test pixel as an object edge pixel (col. 12 lines 24-28). The transputer 44 performs this analysis on a pixel-by-pixel, row-by-row basis, to determine an edge 66 of the human 22 in the digital image (Fig. 7C).

In Blank, the transputer 44 can then superimpose the obtained image of the human 22 on a preselected background 59 or 133 (Figs. 5E and 7D). Referring to FIG. 6, the transputer 44 may then perform a fuzzing function for the edge of the human 22. The transputer 44 may also blend the edge of the human 22 with the new surrounding background, to sharpen the edge of the human 22 in the new background (Fig. 8, col. 13 lines 11-18).

Blank does not disclose a step of determining a level of certainty as to whether or not the detected boundary is a true contour of the person for each part of the detected boundary, as claimed in claim 1. Blank also does not disclose a judging device which determines a level of certainty as to whether or not the detected boundary is a true contour of the person for each part of the detected boundary, as claimed in claim 4.

Suppose, for the sake of the argument, that detection of the edge 66 in Blank is part of detecting a boundary of the person 22 and the background from the original image. Blank does not disclose a step that determines a level of certainty as to whether or not the detected boundary is a true contour of the person for each part of the detected boundary, because Blank does not put the detected edge 66 under further examination, to determine a level of certainty as to whether or not the edge 66 is a true contour of the person. Detailed explanations and critical analysis of Blank are presented below.

In Blank, the detection of pixels for edge 66 (col. 8 lines 44-49) is not both a step of detecting a boundary of the person and the background, and a step of determining a level of certainty as to whether or not the detected boundary is a true contour of the person for each part

of the detected boundary. An edge 66 pixel is detected by determining that the difference between the pixel and an adjacent pixel exceeds a predetermined difference. This difference analysis step does not also determine a level of certainty as to whether or not the detected boundary is a true contour of the person, because a detected boundary does not exist when the difference analysis step is performed in Blank. Edge 66 comes into existence only after pixels are identified for which the difference value exceed the predetermined difference. After the edge pixels have been identified, Blank does not follow up with an additional step applied to edge 66. In other words, once edge 66 has been identified, there is no further inquiry to determine a level of certainty as to whether or not edge 66 is a true contour of the person for each part of edge 66. A level of certainty is not mentioned anywhere in Blank.

Furthermore, in Blank, the fuzzing function performed by transputer 44 to reduce a fuzzy edge 66 to a smooth edge (Fig. 5E, col. 9 lines 30-60), is not a step of determining a level of certainty as to whether or not the detected boundary is a true contour of the person for each part of the detected boundary. To perform fuzzing, the transputer 44 selects one of the edge pixels (i.e., a "test" pixel) and the edge pixels that are immediately adjacent to the test pixel, and determines the average hue gamma value of the three pixels. The transputer 44 sets the hue gamma value of the test pixel to be equal to the calculated average hue value. The transputer 44 then determines if the test pixel is the last edge pixel to be processed in the fuzzing function (Fig. 8). If not, the transputer 44 selects one of the edge pixels that is immediately adjacent to the test pixel, designates this adjacent pixel as the new test pixel, and continues to average pixels in the manner described above. When the transputer 44 determines that the test pixel was the last pixel of the edge 66, the transputer 44 exits the fuzzing function (col. 9 lines 36-60).

Hence, in Blank, the fuzzing function is performed for all pixels of edge 66. All edge pixels have their hue gamma values replaced with averaged hue gamma values. A level of certainty as to whether or not the detected boundary is a true contour of the person is not determined during the fuzzing subroutine. The fuzzing function processes all the pixels of the edge 66 and, hence, does not analyze whether or not the detected boundary is a true contour of the person. Second, the fuzzing function simply refines the edge 66. Hence, the fuzzing function is, at most, part of edge detection. The fuzzing function does not determine any level of certainty.

Hence, there is no step or system in Blank that determines a level of certainty as to whether or not the detected boundary is a true contour of the person for each part of the detected boundary.

Furthermore, Blank does not disclose applying correction processing to a boundary part which is judged not to be a true contour of the person, for concealing the boundary part, in the created composite image, as claimed in claim 1. Blank also does not disclose an image correcting device which applies correction processing to a boundary part which is judged not to be a true contour of the person, for concealing the boundary part, in the created composite image, as claimed in claim 4.

As explained above, Blank does not determine a level of certainty as to whether or not the detected boundary is a true contour of the person. Since no such determination is performed in Blank, Blank cannot then apply correction processing to a boundary part which is judged not to be a true contour of the person.

In addition, the fuzzing function performed by transputer 44 to reduce the fuzzy edge 66 to a smooth edge (Fig. 5E, col. 9 lines 30-60) is not a step that applies correction processing to a boundary part which is judged not to be a true contour of the person, for concealing the boundary part, in the created composite image. This fuzzing function performed by transputer 44 to reduce the fuzzy edge 66 to a smooth edge is performed on the original image 54 including the original background 24 (Fig. 5A). Hence, the fuzzing function is not performed in the created composite image.

Furthermore, the blending function of Blank is not correction processing to a boundary part which is judged not to be a true contour of the person, for concealing the boundary part. To blend the person 22 into the preselected background, the processor averages the hue of the edge of the human and the hue of the portion of the preselected background that is contiguous to the edge. The processor then adjusts the hue of the edge of the human to equal the averaged hue (col. 4 lines 22-27). During blending, the transputer 44 sets the hue of each edge pixel to the average hue of the edge pixel and a pixel adjacent to it (col. 13 lines 19-42). The transputer performs the blending function for all edge pixels (col. 13 lines 39-41).

Blending is performed to adjust the edge of the object 22 to the surrounding background and sharpen the edge of the object (col. 13 lines 15-17). Hence, the blending in Blank is applied indiscriminately to all pixels of the edge of human 22 in a composite image (col. 13 lines 39-41, col. 9 lines 58-60), because the goal of blending is to adjust the edges of the human 22 to the surrounding background and sharpen the edge of the object throughout the picture. It is unreasonable to perform blending for only some portions of the boundary in Blank, because the resulting picture would look bad.

Examiner's reference (page 2 of the Office Action) to "a software determined address, e.g., the upper left edge pixel" in Blank (col. 13 lines 24-25), or to "a software determined address can be a predetermined portion of the object such as the hand, face or clothing of the person that was imaged" (col. 13 lines 55-59) does not point to a boundary part, which is judged not to be a true contour of the person.

The "software determined address, e.g., the upper left edge pixel" in Blank (col. 13 lines 24-25), and the "software determined address at a predetermined portion of the object such as the hand, face or clothing of the person that was imaged" (col. 13 lines 55-59) are not selected because they are boundary parts judged not to be a true contour of the person. The "software determined address, e.g., the upper left edge pixel" (col. 13 lines 24-25) is only a starting point for performing blending (see col. 13 lines 21-25 and 35-42, where it is described that blending is started at the software determined address, and sequentially performed along all edge pixels, up to the last edge pixel). The "software determined address which is a predetermined portion of the object such as the hand, face or clothing of the person that was imaged" (col. 13 lines 55-59) is only a reference point for performing hue gamma value change (see col. 13 lines 60-62 and 65-68, and Fig. 12, where it is described that hue gamma value change sets gamma value of entire object based on the reference value at the software determined address). In other words, a gamma value change is calculated at the software determined address, and is then applied to all object pixels. Furthermore, the goal of hue gamma change is to change lighting conditions of the object and the background. Logically, lighting conditions are adjusted for the whole image, to produce an adequate image result.

Hence, the blending and hue gamma value change functions are applied indiscriminately to all edge pixels. They are not applied only to a boundary part which is judged not to be a true contour of the person.

Hence, with respect to claim 1, Blank fails to disclose, at least, "determining a level of certainty as to whether or not the detected boundary is a true contour of the person for each part of the detected boundary; and applying correction processing to a boundary part which is judged not to be a true contour of the person, for concealing the boundary part, in the created composite image."

Also, with respect to claim 4, Blank fails to disclose, at least, "a judging device which determines a level of certainty as to whether or not the detected boundary is a true contour of the person for each part of the detected boundary; and an image correcting device which applies correction processing to a boundary part which is judged not to be a true contour of the person, for concealing the boundary part, in the created composite image."

For all of the above reasons, taken alone or in combination, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 102 (b) rejection of claims 1 and 4. Claims 2-3 and 10 depend from claim 1 and are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency. Claims 5-6 and 16 depend from claim 4 and are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency.

US 5,577,179 Rejection

The Examiner rejected claims 7-9 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. 102 (b) as being anticipated by US 5,577,179.

Applicant traverses this rejection. Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner fails to establish a *prima facie* case of anticipation.

US 5,577,179 (which is a continuation-in-part of Blank) merely discloses a system and method for editing digital images in three dimensions, including a computer for storing a digital image of an object and a background. At least one additional background image, which includes various components in a three dimensional configuration, is available. The periphery of the object has a first hue, and the surrounding background has a second hue. Based upon the difference between the hues and a predetermined hue difference, the computer locates the edge

of the object and removes portions of the image (i.e., the background) that are outside the edge. The object can then be combined with a preselected one of the other background images so as to form a composite image. Components of the preselected background image are assigned relative positions in the X-Y plane, and are also assigned a value defining their location in one of a plurality of layers which form a Z dimension of the image. The object to be combined with the background is also assigned a value defining its location in at least one of those layers. Optionally, the gamma of the image of the preselected background and the gamma of the image of the object can be matched, thereby making the object appear as if it was imaged under the same lighting conditions as the preselected background (Abstract).

US 5,577,179 does not disclose identifying, in the detected boundary, a boundary part representing a contour of the person with low certainty, and applying correction processing to the boundary part, for concealing the boundary part in the created composite image, as claimed in claim 7.

On page 8 of the Office Action the Examiner alleged that, at col. 16 lines 48-50, US 5,577,179 discloses using edge pixels as a boundary part representing a contour of the person with low certainty. Applicant points out that no such thing is disclosed by US 5,577,179. At col. 16 lines 48-50, US 5,577,179 states that "the computer 130 selects the three pixels just outside the edge of the object and uses them as edge pixels in performing a blend operation." The "three pixels just outside the edge of the object" are not part of the detected boundary. Hence, they do not represent a boundary part, because they are not part of the boundary (they are, in fact, part of the background).

The Examiner also stated (page 8 of the Office Action) that US 5,577,179 discloses correction processing at col. 16, lines 50-53, and col. 17, lines 4 and 23.

At col. 16, lines 50-53 in US 5,577,179, a blending operation is described. The blending operation blends the aforementioned three pixels to the background layer directly below the current object layer. For each of the three pixels, the computer 130 determines the hue of the background pixel in the layer beneath the object pixel, and then averages the hue value of each of the three background pixels with the corresponding object pixel (col. 16 lines 50-58). This blending is not correction processing to the boundary part, for concealing the boundary part

representing a contour of the person with low certainty. The blending is performed for all edge pixels, and not for a boundary part representing a contour of the person with low certainty. The goal of blending is to blend the object edge to the background layer directly below the current object layer. Logically, this blending operation is performed for the whole edge of the object, or else the resulting picture would look bad.

At col. 17, line 4 in US 5,577,179, a fuzz operation is described. The fuzz operation smoothes the edge of the object. The computer 130 determines the hue of three pixels immediately adjacent to edge pixels on the same row, determines the average hue value of the three-pixel interval, and sets the hue value of each of the edge pixels equal to the determined average (col. 17 lines 4-11). The fuzz operation is not correction processing to the boundary part, for concealing the boundary part representing a contour of the person with low certainty. The fuzz operation is performed for all edge pixels. The goal of the fuzz operation is to smooth out the object edge. Logically, this fuzz operation is performed for the whole edge of the object, or else the resulting image would look bad.

At col. 17, line 23 in US 5,577,179, a gradient sharpening function is described. The gradient sharpening function enhances the object edges (col. 17 lines 23-24). The gradient sharpening function is not correction processing to a boundary part, for concealing the boundary part representing a contour of the person with low certainty, because no boundary part representing a contour of the person with low certainty has been identified.

Hence, with respect to claim 7, US 5,577,179 fails to disclose, at least, "identifying, in the detected boundary, a boundary part representing a contour of the person with low certainty; and applying correction processing to the boundary part, for concealing the boundary part in the created composite image."

For all of the above reasons, taken alone or in combination, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 102 (b) rejection of claim 7. Claims 8, 9 and 25 depend from claim 7 and are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §103

Blank and US 5,577,179 Rejection

The Examiner rejected claims 11-12, 14, 17-19, 21, 23 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Blank in view of US 5,577,179. Applicant traverses this rejection.

Applicant respectfully submits the Examiner has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, the Examiner has the burden of meeting the basic criterion that the prior art must teach or suggest all of the claim limitations.

Claims 11-12, 14 and 21 depending from claim 1, and claims 17-19 and 23 depending from claim 4

Regarding this basic criterion, neither Blank nor US 5,577,179 disclose determining a level of certainty as to whether or not the detected boundary is a true contour of the person for each part of the detected boundary; and applying correction processing to a boundary part which is judged not to be a true contour of the person, for concealing the boundary part, in the created composite image, as claimed in claim 1.

The teachings of Blank are presented above in the arguments traversing the §102 rejection of claim 1. As provided above in the arguments for the allowability of claim 1, Blank does not disclose or suggest determining a level of certainty as to whether or not the detected boundary is a true contour of the person for each part of the detected boundary; and applying correction processing to a boundary part which is judged not to be a true contour of the person, for concealing the boundary part, in the created composite image. Hence, Blank fails to teach or suggest all of the elements for claim 1.

US 5,577,179 does not disclose determining a level of certainty as to whether or not the detected boundary is a true contour of the person for each part of the detected boundary. In US 5,577,179, an edge 146 is detected by comparing differences between adjacent pixels to a predetermined difference, to detect pixels which are not part of a monochrome background (col. 13 lines 44-54). After edge 146 is detected, no further step is performed to determine a level of certainty as to whether or not the detected boundary is a true contour of the person for each part of the detected boundary. Edge detection in US 5,577,179 is identical to edge detection in Blank (US 5,577,179 is a continuation-in-part of Blank), and the arguments related to edge detection in

Blank and presented in the section traversing the §102 rejection of claim 1 also apply to edge detection in US 5,577,179.

US 5,577,179 also does not apply correction processing to a boundary part which is judged not to be a true contour of the person, for concealing the boundary part, in the created composite image, because a boundary part, which is judged not to be a true contour of the person is not determined in US 5,577,179. The blending, fuzz and gradient sharpening operations described at col. 16, lines 50-53, and col. 17, lines 4 and 23 in US 5,577,179 (and presented in the arguments traversing the §102 rejection of claim 7) enhance the edge of an object. The blending, fuzz and gradient sharpening operations are not concealing operations. Furthermore, the blending, fuzz and gradient sharpening operations are not applied to a boundary part which is judged not to be a true contour of the person. Hence, US 5,577,179 fails to teach or suggest all of the elements for claim 1.

Therefore, Blank and US 5,577,179 do not teach or suggest all of the claim limitations of claim 1.

Arguments similar to those presented above are applicable to claim 4. Blank and US 5,577,179 do not teach or suggest all of the claim limitations of claim 4.

For all of the above reasons, taken alone or in combination, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 103(a) rejection of claims 11-12, 14 and 21 that depend from claim 1, and of claims 17-19 and 23 that depend from claim 4.

Claim 25 depending from claim 7

In the Office Action, the Examiner has not described any reasons for rejecting claim 25. To advance prosecution, Applicant presents below arguments for allowability of claim 25.

Neither Blank nor US 5,577,179 disclose identifying, in the detected boundary, a boundary part representing a contour of the person with low certainty; and applying correction processing to the boundary part, for concealing the boundary part in the created composite image, as claimed in claim 7.

The teachings of US 5,577,179 are presented above in the arguments traversing the §102 rejection of claim 7. As provided above in the arguments for the allowability of claim 7, US

5,577,179 does not disclose identifying, in the detected boundary, a boundary part representing a contour of the person with low certainty; and applying correction processing to the boundary part, for concealing the boundary part in the created composite image. Hence, US 5,577,179 fails to teach or suggest all of the elements for claim 7.

Blank does not disclose or suggest identifying, in the detected boundary, a boundary part representing a contour of the person with low certainty. As presented above in the arguments for the allowability of claim 1, Blank detects the edge 66, but does not follow up with an additional step applied to the detected edge 66. Hence, the edge detection of Blank is not a step of identifying, in the detected boundary, a boundary part representing a contour of the person with low certainty. Certainty levels are not discussed anywhere in Blank. In addition, the fuzzing function in Blank is performed for all pixels in the edge 66. A boundary part representing a contour of the person with low certainty is nowhere identified in Blank. In fact, the fuzzing function processes all the pixels of the edge 66 and hence, does not identify a boundary part representing a contour of the person with low certainty. Second, the fuzzing function simply refines the edge 66, and is, at most, part of edge detection. The fuzzing function improves the appearance of edge 66, and does not determine a boundary part representing a contour of the person with low certainty.

Blank also does not disclose or suggest applying correction processing to the boundary part, for concealing the boundary part in the created composite image. The blending function in Blank is performed to adjust the edges of the object 22 with the surrounding background to sharpen the edge of the object (col. 13 lines 15-17). Hence, the blending function of Blank is applied indiscriminately to all pixels of an edge of the human 22 in a composite image (col. 13 lines 39-41, col. 9 lines 58-60). In conclusion, blending is not correction processing for concealing a boundary part representing a contour of the person with low certainty.

Therefore, Blank and US 5,577,179 do not teach or suggest all of the claim limitations of claim 7.

For all of the above reasons, taken alone or in combination, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 103(a) rejection of claim 25 which depends from claim 7.

Blank, US 5,577,179 and Lee Rejection

The Examiner rejected claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Blank in view of US 5,577,179 further in view of US 20030058939 ("Lee"). Applicant traverses this rejection.

Applicant respectfully submits the Examiner has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

Claim 13 depends from claim 1.

Blank, US 5,577,179 and Lee do not disclose determining a level of certainty as to whether or not the detected boundary is a true contour of the person for each part of the detected boundary; and applying correction processing to a boundary part which is judged not to be a true contour of the person, for concealing the boundary part, in the created composite image, as claimed in claim 1.

The teachings of Blank and US 5,577,179 are presented above in the arguments traversing the §102 rejection of claim 1 and the §103 rejection of claims 11-12, 14 and 21. As provided above in the arguments for the allowability of claims 1, 11-12, 14 and 21, Blank and US5,577,179 fail to teach or suggest all of the elements for claim 1.

Lee merely discloses a video telecommunication system that obtains a desired background scene by automatically changing an original background scene into a different background scene. The system of Lee comprises a background scene separation means for separating an object to be transmitted from a background scene. A background picture database provides a background picture to be transmitted instead of the original background scene. A background picture synthesis means synthesizes the separated object and a new background picture which is selected from the background picture database. A picture transmission means transmits a synthesized picture synthesized by the separated object and the new background picture (Abstract).

Lee is not concerned with a level of certainty as to whether or not a detected boundary is a true contour of a person. Hence, Lee does not teach or suggest determining a level of certainty as to whether or not the detected boundary is a true contour of the person for each part of the

detected boundary. Lee also does not teach or suggest applying correction processing to a boundary part which is judged not to be a true contour of the person, for concealing the boundary part. Hence, Lee fails to teach or suggest all of the elements for claim 1.

For all of the above reasons, taken alone or in combination, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 103(a) rejection of claim 13 that depends from claim 1.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for indicating allowable subject matter for claims 15, 20, 22, 24 and 26.

Applicant has amended claims 22, 24 and 26 to include the limitations of their corresponding independent claims. Hence, claims 22, 24 and 26 are now independent.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, this application appears to be in condition for allowance and the Examiner is, therefore, requested to reexamine the application and pass the claims to issue.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Corina E. Tanasa, Limited Recognition No. L0292 under 37 CFR §11.9(b), at telephone number (703) 208-4003, located in the Washington, DC area, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: December 26, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

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